

Spring 8-15-2013

# ENG 3700-001: Reading in the U.S. in the Eighteenth Century

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## Recommended Citation

Vietto, Angela, "ENG 3700-001: Reading in the U.S. in the Eighteenth Century" (2013). *Fall 2013*. 84.  
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## English 3700

### Reading in the U.S. in the Eighteenth Century

Prof. Angela Vietto  
Office: 3345 Coleman Hall  
Office hours: M 1-2, W 2-3, R 2-4, F 1-2\*  
*and by appointment*

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In this class, we will study early American literature through the lens of the history of reading, focusing on the eighteenth century, especially the period following the American Revolution. We will take an active learning approach: in addition to traditional readings and discussion, the course requires three projects that are designed to exercise and enhance your critical thinking skills and to help you make connections among ideas both within and beyond the boundaries of our course.

#### Learning Objectives

Like all classes in the English major, this class is designed to help you

- improve your flexibility and independence as a writer and critical thinker and
- enhance your reading, analytic, and speaking skills.

In addition, this course aims to help you:

- understand in a general way the broad history of reading in English,
- become familiar with the contexts of reading in the United States during the eighteenth century,
- learn about and apply relevant cultural context to an understanding of early American literature,
- learn about the major genres that were popular reading in the U.S. just after the Revolution,
- analyze the relationships among three genres (novels, autobiography, and magazines), and
- consider the roles of race, class, gender, region, and religion in the experiences of reading.

#### Books from Textbook Rental

Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1798)

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* (1789)

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (written 1771-1790; first pub. 1793)

P. D. Manvil, *Lucinda, or the Mountain Mourner* (1807)

Carla Mulford, editor: *The Power of Sympathy* (by William Hill Brown; 1789) and *The Coquette* (by Hannah Webster Foster; 1797)

\*Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*

\*Leonora Sansay, *Secret History; or the Horrors of Santo Domingo* (1808) and *Laura* (1809)

#### \*Contacting Me

You have five ways to reach me outside of class: (1) come to office hours (no appointment needed); (2) make an appointment for a different time; (3) phone me, before 9 p.m.; (4) text me, before 9 p.m.; (5) if you can't phone, email me (but I only promise to check and respond to student emails once daily, usually 9 to 10 p.m., and no extensions by email).

Projects		Final Grading Scale
Reading/Participation/Quizzes	15%	A 90-100%
Mid-term Exam	10%	B 80-89%
Essay	20%	C 70-79%
Integrative Learning Project	20%	D 60-69%
Case Study	25%	F 59% and below
Final Exam	10%	

### **Reading/Participation/Quizzes**

Coming to class having carefully prepared to discuss the common readings in a meaningful way is the single most important element of learning in a literature class. *I'd like your comments about the best way to achieve this goal.* Ideally, reading quizzes would not be necessary, but I reserve the right to give reading quizzes with or without advance notice in order to provide extrinsic motivation to read, should intrinsic motivation prove to be broadly lacking.

### **Mid-term Exam**

The mid-term will be predominantly objective, covering the history and theory about reading that we will have read and discussed as well as the primary texts we will have read by mid-term.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will be based on your responses to the case study presentations of your classmates, made during the final week of class.

### **Projects: Essay, Integrative Learning Project, and Case Study**

All three are designed to require both mastery of the course material *and* independent critical thinking. That means that they are the kinds of projects that can allow you to develop artifacts you could use in an online portfolio or a graduate school application, or projects you could talk about when asked about your analytic abilities in a job interview.

Detailed assignment sheets will be distributed, but here is an overview.

The essay will be based on your analysis of one or more early American magazine; this will be the most traditional of the assignments.

The integrative learning project asks you to design a project that allows you to explore the connections between our course material and another interest of yours. This project will include three parts: the project itself, which might or might not be a written document, a brief written reflection, and a presentation to the class.

The case study will be a semester-long project in which you will read a text that we not have read as a class and apply as much of the course material as you can to an analysis of that text, which you will present both as a written report and as a presentation to the class.

### **Recommendations/References**

Because of the nature of the assignments in this course, I will be in a particularly good position to offer letters of recommendation for graduate school or to serve as a reference when you start your job search. If you do excellent work in this class, then, I strongly recommend that you hang onto your projects so that you can remind me of what you did if you decide to ask me to serve as a reference later.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

### **The Electronic Writing Portfolio**

As long as they meet other requirements for the EWP, you may use any essay you write in this class and for which you earn a C or better to submit to the Electronic Writing Portfolio. (Keep in mind that the EWP requires at least 750 words and does not accept fiction. Also, if you submit a paper that uses sources, remember that I can't score the essay as acceptable unless the list of works cited is part of the word processing file rather than in a separate document.) Submissions must be completed by finals week at the latest.

### **The English Department's statement on plagiarism**

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards."

### **My statement on academic honesty**

I assume I can trust you. If you are ever tempted to break that trust because you don't feel you have enough time to complete an assignment or you don't understand the assignment, please, please, *please* pick up your phone and text or call me for help instead of plagiarizing or otherwise cheating.

I have loads of patience for students who want help. I have no patience whatsoever for cheating in a junior/senior level English course. Blatant acts of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the class and a report to the Office of Student Standards.

## Scheduling

M Aug 19	Introductions
W Aug 21	Readings: Finkelstein & McCleary, "Readers and Reading" and Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader"
F Aug 23	Selections from <i>The New England Primer</i> and Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England"
M Aug 26	Franklin's <i>Autobiography</i> , part 1 (pp. 1-57)
W Aug 28	Franklin's <i>Autobiography</i> , part 2 (pp. 58-76) <b>Case study text selections due</b>
F Aug 30	Case study texts distributed <b>Integrative learning project proposal due</b>
M Sep 2	Labor Day – no classes
W Sep 4	Reading—case study selections In class: Franklin's reading
F Sep 6	Reading—case study selections Conferences to discuss case study texts and integrative learning projects (no class)
M Sep 9	Reading—case study selections In class: Franklin's reading
W Sep 11	Flint, "Reading Practices" and Rose, "Rereading the English Common Reader"
F Sep 13	Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> , pp. 31-94
M Sep 16	Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> , pp. 95-160
W Sep 18	Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> , pp. 161-236
F Sep 20	Readers' responses to Equiano
M Sep 23	<i>History of Reading in America</i> , ch. 11, "Practices of Reading"
W Sep 25	William Hill Brown, <i>The Power of Sympathy</i> , pp. 9-59
F Sep 27	William Hill Brown, <i>The Power of Sympathy</i> , pp. 59-103

M Sept 30	Foster, <i>The Coquette</i> , pp. 107-170
W Oct 2	Foster, <i>The Coquette</i> , pp. 171-242
F Oct 4	No common reading—work on integrative learning projects, case studies, review for exam. In class: Readers' responses to seduction novels
M Oct 7	No common reading—work on integrative learning projects, case studies, review for exam. In class: Questions in prep for exam
W Oct 9	<b>Mid-term exam</b>
F Oct 11	Fall break – no classes
M Oct 14	<b>Progress report on integrative learning projects due.</b> Magazine essay assigned. In class: exploration of magazines.
W Oct 16	<b>Magazine essay proposal due.</b> Conferences (no class)
F Oct 18	Conferences (no class)
M Oct 21	<b>Draft of essay due.</b> In class: share findings; brainstorm applications to case studies.
W Oct 23	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 3-55
F Oct 25	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 56-115
M Oct 28	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 116-172
W Oct 30	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 173-233
F Nov 1	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i> , pp. 234-278
M Nov 4	<b>Integrative learning projects due. Presentations.</b>
W Nov 6	<b>Presentations.</b>
F Nov 8	<b>Final version of essay due.</b>
M Nov 11	Manvill, <i>Lucinda or the Mountain Mourner</i> , pp. 1-55
W Nov 13	Manvill, <i>Lucinda or the Mountain Mourner</i> , pp. 56-96
F Nov 15	Sansay, <i>Laura</i> , pp. 155-198

M Nov 18	Sansay, <i>Laura</i> , pp. 198-222 and 239-242
W Nov 20	In class: workshop on case studies
F Nov 22	Individual conferences (no class) <b>Draft of case study report due (<i>tentative</i>)</b>
Nov 25-29	Thanksgiving break
M Dec 2	<b>Case study presentations</b>
W Dec 4	<b>Case study presentations</b>
F Dec 6	<b>Case study presentations</b> <b>Written case study report due.</b>
Tues. Dec. 10	Final exam, 8 a.m.-10 a.m.